

WO 01/20180

3/p, b

PCT/DE00/03222

Bearing device

5

The invention concerns a bearing device for rotatably receiving a control element in media-carrying conduits of an internal combustion engine with bearing receiving means which rotatably receive the control element and can be fixed in the conduits.

10 Preferably the control elements are in the form of a turbulence flap, a length switching flap or the like and the media-carrying conduits can be for example in the form of an induction system for vehicles.

The flaps have stub-like projections which extend substantially in the direction of their longitudinal extent and which are rotatably supported in
15 the bearing receiving means. The stub-like projections, the flap and the bearing receiving means also have a steel shaft passing therethrough, the steel shaft being non-rotatably connected to the flap. The shaft is rotated by way of a setting unit which is preferably in the form of a stepping motor,
~~thereby changing the setting angle of the flaps connected to the shaft.~~
20 The setting angle of the plate members is adjusted as desired by way of the positioning of the stepping motor. The mode of operation and the areas of use of turbulence flaps in induction systems are well-known to the man skilled in the art.

The stub-like projections on the flaps are not absolutely necessary; it
25 is also possible for the bearing receiving means to rotatably receive shafts on which the flaps are non-rotatably arranged. The advantage of a steel shaft is that it can be supported in such a way as to be displaceable, whereby jamming of the flaps is prevented in the event of the steel shaft expanding due to the effect of heat.

30 For fitting each individual flap in the induction pipe, in the state of the art at least three components are required, which have to be assembled together, namely the flap with two respective bearing receiving means which have to be fitted on to the stub-like projections and which are

frequently referred to as 'bearing blocks'. Those bearing receiving means comprise substantially plate-like plastic elements with a through bore which operates as a bearing. The bearing receiving means in turn have to be fitted in the assembly position in receiving means of the induction pipe.

5 That fitting operation can involve problems in constricted engine compartments. Moreover, the fixing arrangement in accordance with the state of the art requires a relatively large amount of space as the bearing blocks must be of a certain minimum width in order to prevent unwanted tilting.

10 Therefore the technical object of the present invention is to further develop a bearing of the general kind set forth, in such a way that the installation thereof is simplified.

In accordance with the invention that object is attained in that the bearing receiving means can be connected by way of at least partially elastic connecting element to form a bearing unit and together with the connecting element and the inserted flap can be fitted into a receiving means provided in the induction pipe. By virtue of that configuration the bearing unit can be pre-assembled externally so that, upon assembly of the engine, the bearing unit only has to be fitted into a receiving means provided for same on the induction pipe. The procedure involved in inserting and accurately adjusting the bearings is eliminated as the bearings are held in the reference position by the connecting element. The elastic nature of the connecting element permits deformation of the bearing unit for fitting the otherwise rigid flap into the bearing openings of the bearings.

25 The substantial advantages of the invention lie in the capability of pre-assembly and the fact that the bearing unit can be of any desired configuration, thereby affording a great deal of freedom in terms of design from the point of view of plastic engineering.

Preferably the bearing receiving means and the connecting element
30 are formed in one piece in a bush-like manner. That bush, that is to say the
connecting element and the two bearings, with the receiving openings
provided therein, are preferably injection molded in the form of a one-piece
plastic component. The use of glass fiber-reinforced polyamides has proven

to be particularly desirable as they are both temperature-resistant and also resistant to the media which occur in the engine.

In the assembly procedure the bearing unit is bent open and the flap inserted. After the flap has been placed in the bearing receiving means, the bearing unit contracts again to assume its original configuration.

It has proven to be particularly desirable for the bush to be substantially in the form of a C-shaped profile which can be bent open at the separation plane. For simplifying assembly and accurate fixing of the bearing unit in the induction pipe, it is also advantageous for the induction pipe to be provided with a guide bar which engages into the bearing unit in the position of installation, in order to adjust it.

Finally, the bearing unit can be provided with an edge which is the upper edge in the position of installation and which serves as a sealing edge for further assemblies to be fixed on the induction pipe. In that way it is possible for example to eliminate additional sealing elements between the induction pipe and the cylinder head.

An embodiment of the invention is described in greater detail hereinafter with reference to the drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of the bearing unit with assembled
20 flap,

Figure 2 shows a perspective view of the bearing unit without the inserted flap,

Figure 3 shows a perspective view of the flap,

Figure 4 shows a perspective view of the bearing unit during
25 assembly of the flap,

Figure 5 shows a side view in section taken along line V-V in Figure 2, and

Figure 6 shows a perspective view of a plurality of bearing units inserted into an induction manifold.

30 As can be seen in particular from Figures 1 and 2 the bearing unit comprises a substantially rectangular bush-shaped plastic body. A turbulence flap 2 which is equally made from plastic material is rotatably fitted into the bearing unit 1. In the Figures, the bearing unit 1 is shown

turned through 180° relative to the position which it assumes in the situation of installation in the induction pipe 3 as shown in Figure 6.

Alternatively the flap 2 can be made from metal in order to prevent particles of plastic material coming away from the flap in the event of misfires. In order to implement optimum frictional pairing as between the
 5 flap 2 and the bearing unit 1 the bearing journals or projections 22, 23 of the turbulence flap 2 have a suitable plastic material injection molded therearound. Making the flap from steel, in comparison with making it from plastic material, enjoys the advantages that it has better dimensional
 10 accuracy and a higher level of stability in relation to misfires. In addition the cross-section of the flaps can be thinner in comparison with the plastic form of flap, and that entails a reduction in the degree of encroachment of the flap in the cross-section in the pipe.

The bearing unit 1 has two substantially mutually parallel bearing
 15 receiving means 10 and 11 which form the side limbs of the bearing unit. The bearing receiving means 10 and 11 are each provided with respective holes 12 and 13 which are oriented in co-linear relationship with each other. The stub-like projections on the turbulence flap 2 are rotatably accommodated in those holes in the position of installation.

20 The bearing receiving means 10 and 11 are connected together by way of a connecting element 14 which is injection molded thereon in one piece. The connecting element forms the longitudinal limb and the bearing receiving means 10 and 11 form the transverse limbs of the bearing unit 1. The connecting element 14 can be partially twisted in order to be able to fit
 25 the turbulence flap into the bearing unit 1. After deformation the bearing unit 1 returns to its original rest position again. For the purposes of inserting a flap 2 the bearing receiving means 10 and 11 can be bent out of their rest position into an angled position.

Adjoining the bearing receiving means 10 and 11 are limbs 15 and 16
 30 which once again extend at a right angle to the bearing receiving means 10 and 11. The limbs 15 and 16 thus extend substantially parallel to the connecting element 14 and are injection molded in one piece to the bearing receiving means 10 and 11.

10

25

30

The embodiment by way of example of the invention has been described hereinbefore with reference to a turbulence flap; it will be apparent to the man skilled in the art that the control element does not have to be in the form of a flap. The control element can for example also
5 be in the form of a roller.

List of references

- 1 bearing unit
- 2 turbulence flap
- 3 induction pipe
- 4 air flow direction
- 10 bearing receiving means
- 11 bearing receiving means
- 12 hole
- 13 hole
- 14 connecting element
- 14a bending location
- 15 limb
- 15a fixing limb
- 15b guide groove
- 15c flow wall
- 15d opening
- 16 limb
- 16a fixing limb
- 16b guide groove
- 17 sealing edge
- 20 flap
- 21 receiving means
- 22 projection
- 23 projection